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San Antonio Express-News

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Mostly sunny: High 70, Low 49

Abortion ban in the state is eased

Federal appeals court gives OK to use of pills

By Jeremy Blackman

AUSTIN BUREAU

A federal appeals court has restored access to early-stage abortions in Texas, reversing part of its own ruling a week ago and further eroding the state's emergency abortion prohibition, which has become a rallying cause among social conservatives during the coronavirus pandemic.

The ruling, by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, allows women to end their pregnancies using pills, known as medication abortions.

The court previously ruled that surgical abortions also can proceed for women who are nearing the state's 22-week limit to obtain one.

It appeared to be a late but lasting victory for abortion providers in a legal case that has careered for weeks between the Fifth Circuit and a U.S. District Court in Austin.

In the end, the state's ban proved too stringent even for the conservative-led appeals court, which acknowledged late Monday that medication abortions don't use any of the protective gear in demand during the pandemic.

Conserving those items was central to the argument that state officials have made for the ban.

"We have doubts about petitioners' showing as to medication abortions," two of the court's justices wrote, referring to the state's request to

Abortion continues on A13



Courtesy

Jimmie Hayden was the first COVID-19 patient to receive plasma therapy in San Antonio. He's seen with wife Ashley.

Man is first to get plasma therapy here

By Lauren Caruba

STAFF WRITER

When Ashley Hayden's husband, Jimmie, was struggling to breathe, she thought their emergency visit to the hospital would be brief.

She expected he would receive some oxygen and emerge from Methodist Hospital | Stone Oak with some new prescriptions.

Instead, on April 2, Jimmie, 47, was diagnosed with COVID-19. Within hours, he was taken into the intensive care unit, where he would have to rely on the support of a ventilator to breathe.

He's been there ever since.

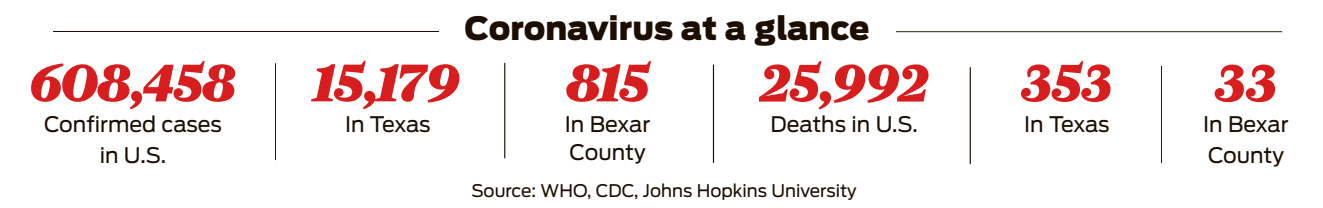
Ashley and their four children know firsthand the fear, uncertainty, isolation and helplessness that accompanies a coronavirus diagnosis.

Now, they've also been given reason for encouragement.

On Thursday, Jimmie was the first COVID-19 patient in San Antonio to receive blood plasma from a person who had recovered from the virus.

While the therapy still is experimental, doctors, researchers and health officials are optimistic.

Plasma continues on A8



Feds draw up proposal for phased reopenings

By Lena H. Sun, Josh Dawsey and William Wan

WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — A team of government officials — led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — has created a public health strategy to combat the coronavirus and reopen parts of the country.

Their strategy, obtained by the Wash-

ington Post, is part of a larger White House effort to draft a national plan to get Americans out of their homes and back to work.

It gives guidance to state and local governments on how they can ease mitigation efforts, moving from drastic restrictions such as stay-at-home orders in a phased way to support a safe reopening.

CDC and FEMA officials have worked on the public health response for at least the past week, and the resulting document by the two agencies has been dis-

cussed at the White House, including by members of the coronavirus task force, said two administration officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

President Donald Trump wants a final detailed plan on reopening the country ready within days so he can issue suggestions for some states to reopen May 1, officials said.

"The plans to reopen the country are close to being finalized," Trump said at a White House briefing Tuesday.

Reopenings continues on A11



Bob Owen / Staff photographer

Laura Mayes, a worker at City Hall, picks up 2-year-old daughter Marisa from a downtown day care center.

FOR SOME, DAY CARE STILL IS A NECESSITY

Workers deemed essential often have no other choice

By Sara Cline

STAFF WRITER

Workers deemed essential have had to face numerous additional challenges during the coronavirus pandemic, but one of the major stressors for those with families has been how to care for small children.

Many day care centers have closed, while those that still are open raise parents' concerns about the contagion risk among active youngsters who can be hard to corral at the best of times, let alone in these unsettling days.

Grandparents aren't the usual handy

More inside

- » Local rent crisis. **A2**
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option they have been in the past because those 60 and older and those who have underlying health conditions, such as diabetes and weakened immune systems, are at higher risk for the disease.

Laura and T.J. Mayes, parents of toddler Marisa, are among the parents facing those issues. Both are considered essential and continue to go into their offices: Laura Mayes is the assistant director of San Antonio's government and public affairs office and attorney T.J. Mayes is host of KLRN's weekly news show, "On the Record."

Day care continues on A13

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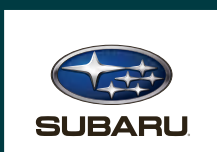
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